



## Way To GO!

Watch out for "Way To Go!" messages, a new way for the Commissioner to thank employees individually when their good work comes to her attention. Nominate your co-workers for a "Way To Go!" message by e-mailing Peggie Dore, or forward the "Way To Go!" YOU receive to a deserving colleague.

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## Acronyms

Many terms and phrases that are familiar to us in our everyday work become shortened into acronyms for speed and convenience—but to new employees and our external partners, our acronyms can spell confusion! Check out our key to common acronyms used in DHHS at <http://inet.state.me.us/dhs/index.shtml> (soon to be updated).

# Newsletter

## Health and Human Services

Maine people living safe, healthy and productive lives

March 2006

Volume 1, Issue 2

## Legislative Update by Lucky Hollander, DHHS Legislative Relations

Greetings from Augusta!

Last year about this time, I sent an e-mail to everyone with some of the highlights of what was going on in the legislature. This year, you will be getting the news in this column.

As some of you know, the legislature convenes for two years. The first year is the long session (January – June) and the second year is the short (January – April). Presently we are in the second session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Legislature. By April 15<sup>th</sup> their work will be done, and they will go back to their districts.

In the first session, the focus, unfortunately, was on a very difficult budget process, and the cuts we had to make to address the deficit. While there were a number of adjustments, some things that perhaps captured the most public attention were:

**Child Welfare Reform:** Focused on moving children out of residential care and in to permanency in their families and community, it drew much debate both in the legislature and among providers. The legislature delayed any budgetary decisions until we convened a work group over the summer and fall of providers, community members, and staff, to work out a plan that would detail what of the proposed initiatives would work best for children and families in our care. We have produced a report with recommendations that can be found on line at: <http://mcr.supremeserver21.com>

**Managed Care Initiative:** There was a projected savings of \$10 Million by implementing Managed Care system in mental health services by July, 2007. The planning has begun, and we are optimistic that we will be able to reach that target..

**Closing Freeport Towne Square** (group home in Freeport): While there was support for the concept, the concern was that the time line was too aggressive, and we have worked with the families and legislature to slow down the transition to assure every person has the right plan for them.

**The new billing system in Office of Maine Care Services (OMS)** called MECMS which essentially failed to produce and has taken us all year to fix. We have reorganized and have put a corrective system in place to address the issues of payments to providers.

Now we are in the second session. While shorter, it is certainly not void of difficult conversations. There is little new policy debated in the second session, but there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year budget (called the supplemental) that addresses any changes we have to make to the budget they passed last year. This budget does not have nearly the difficult monetary issues, but the on-going challenges of implementing managed care and child welfare reform while being sure we are listening to and including community leaders, providers and consumers remain high in on our priority list.

Next issue I will give you an idea of what policy or new initiatives were passed this session, and give you an update on other issues that may be bubbling up in the legislative arena.

You may always e-mail me at [lucky.hollander@maine.gov](mailto:lucky.hollander@maine.gov) if you have any thoughts, questions, or to check out the status of any bills. I am aware that there is a lot of mythology and misperception of what happens at the Capitol, so please feel free to ask me.

Lucky Hollander, Director, Legislative Relations

## Career Announcements

### Office of Integrated Access and Support Director Named

**A**cting Commissioner Brenda Harvey announced last week that she has appointed Barbara J. Van Burgel, of Mercer, as Director of the Office of Integrated Access and Support (formerly Bureau of Family Independence). Van Burgel has served as acting Director since October, 2003 and has been employed by DHHS and its predecessor, The Department of Human Services (DHS), since 1983.

In naming Van Burgel, Acting Commissioner Harvey said that she has appointed someone who is deeply committed to providing the best possible service to clients throughout Maine. "Barbara has a proven track record," Harvey said. "She's an expert in designing and implementing effective programs and maintaining program integrity."

Harvey said that as the Department of Health and Human Services faces more Federal budget cuts it is critical to have someone with Van Burgel's experience within the Department. "It's critical," Harvey said, "that Office of Integrated Access and Support has someone with Barbara's skill and compassion."

Van Burgel's experience in state government is extensive. In 1988, she was appointed Director of the



**Barbara Van Burgel**

Aspire welfare reform job training program. In 1996, Van Burgel was named Deputy Director of the Bureau of Family Independence.

The Office of Integrated Access and Support is responsible for the administration of Maine's public assistance program

including Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), The Food Stamp Program, the Child Support Enforcement and the General Assistance programs. In addition, the Office determines financial eligibility for those seeking MaineCare services.



### Patrick Named Children's Behavioral Services Manager

**C**hildren's Behavioral Health Services is very pleased to announce that the new Children's System's Manager is Douglas Patrick.



**Douglas Patrick**

Doug has a Bachelor of Arts in political science from California State University, a Juris Doctor degree from Boston College of Law and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of New England. Doug has an excellent breadth and depth of knowledge to bring to this position. He has worked in various positions, such as an attorney in both state and federal courts, a family therapist, and Program Manager of child and family community-based mental health services. Doug has been actively involved in projects related to early child care, juvenile drug court, and domestic violence. Doug joined the OCFS team on February 21st.

## Feds Praise Maine Food Stamp Program

**T**he United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service praised Maine's Food Stamp program. In a March 1st statement, the Department called Maine's program one of the 10 promising practices in Food Stamp outreach in the nation.

The USDA pointed to DHHS offices in Bangor, Portland and Sanford as successful examples of customer centered practices. Those offices, the USDA said, "demonstrate a commitment to excellence in customer service by maintaining a policy of seeing clients within 20 minutes. Signs are posted that tell applicants/recipients to let the receptionist know if the time limit has passed but most clients are seen immediately."

The Portland office, the USDA revealed has an average of 230 walk-ins daily, yet the 20-minute wait policy is maintained. Maine has one of the highest Food Stamp Program participation rates in the nation. This effort contributed to the USDA Hunger Champions award they received in FY 2005.



### Did You Know?

Electronic Benefits Cards were introduced in the spring of 2003 as a replacement for food stamps and other assistance vouchers for Mainers.

EBT cards allow customers more privacy and the State more accountability—a win-win situation!

## Youth, Family Organizations Unite to Address Child Trauma

"Trauma takes away dreams".

That was the message at the core of an event last week in Auburn that introduced the nation's first Trauma-Informed System of Care.

The project, led by Tri-county Mental Health Services (TCMHS) in partnership with the State of Maine Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Children's Behavioral Health Services, will transform services for children and families in our region over the next six years. It will create a new way of working as a community to meet the needs of children and families through coordination, collaboration, and communication.

Keynote speaker Karen Baldacci called the project an exciting start toward "building health children, families, communities, and a healthy Maine." The First Lady is Chair of Maine's Children's Cabinet.

"Every child desires the opportunity to be socially and emotionally healthy and a vital part of their community. Each one of you can help us reach this goal," she said. The audience of 130+ people included mental health providers, educators, law enforcement, juvenile justice, healthcare, community groups, policy-makers, youths and families, all of whom will be working together over the next six years in the \$9 million project funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Tri-County Mental Health Services is Maine's most comprehensive agency dealing with the psychological and social well-being of children, adults, and elders. TCMHS serves over 6,000 individuals each year with innovative programs and services addressing mental health, substance abuse, mental retardation/developmental disabilities, autism, and more. Its philosophy of building toward recovery and sensitivity to traumatic experiences of consumers gives hope to individuals, families, and communities in Androscoggin, Northern Cumberland, Franklin and Oxford counties.



**Vicki Wheelock**

“Good afternoon, Health and Human Services...”

She thinks she gets 100 phone calls a day—maybe more. They call about problems - problems with food stamps, problems with MaineCare, problems with caseworkers, problems with the Medicare Part D and so it goes.

Then, there are the people who come through the door. Each working day dozens of them course through her chilly lobby at 221 State Street. These folks have problems too and she can't fix them. That's not her job, but she helps. She helps in the way she knows best.

She is Vicki Wheelock, a receptionist, and what she can't fix she makes better by making everyone she meets a little happier. She says it's not always easy,

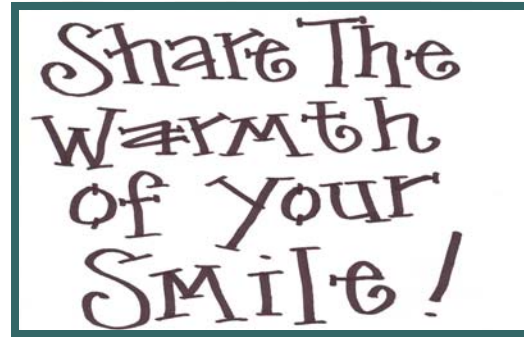
## Spotlight

especially when you're talking to people who have had better days.

“You don't give up on people,” Wheelock says. “You keep smiling and they come right around.”

Wheelock is in the habit of spreading good cheer, and while she's at it, little pearls of wisdom. These are her “sayings” that she hand-draws on white 4 by 6 inch cards and then tapes to the window that separates her from the people with the problems.

One of the cards says: “Dreams are a wish your heart makes” Another reads:



Wheelock says that people “judge a place by the first person they meet.” So, she

figures you might as well do what you can to keep people happy rather than send them away angry, sad or just plain confused.

“They smile and say ‘I love reading your sign,’”

Wheelock, who lives in Farmingdale and has three children, says. “People say to me, it's nice to have such a happy person. I have problems like everybody else, but you can still be happy and deal with the stresses of life.” Wheelock says she really likes it here. She plans to keep writing new signs and taping them the glass out front every morning—signs like: “Always remember you are unique—just like everyone else!”

If you ask her if she'll ever run out of new pearls of wisdom she'll tell you, “No! I've been collecting sayings for a long time and if I run out, I'll just make them up!” And so it goes.

## Statewide Central and Regional DHHS Locations

### Portland

161 Marginal Way  
175 Lancaster Street

### Sanford

890 Main Street

### Biddeford

208 Graham Street

### Lewiston

200 Main Street  
15 Mollison Way

### South Paris

243 Main Street

### Farmington

114 Corn Shop Lane

### Augusta

35 Anthony Avenue  
442 Civic Center Drive  
27 Independence Drive

47 Independence Drive,

Greenlaw Bldg

32 Blossom Lane,

Marquardt Bldg.

221 State Street

Whitten Road

Carlton Mill Building,

Winthrop (DDS)

286 Water Street

(MCDC Admin)

244 Water Street (Vital

Records)

250 Arsenal St.

(Riverview PC)

### Waterville

74 Drummond Avenue

### Belfast

9 Field Street

### Bath

34 Wing Farm Parkway

### Rockland

360 Old County Road

### Thomaston

212 New County Road

### Skowhegan

98 North Avenue

### Bangor

396 Griffin Road

6 State Street

175 Hogan Road (Pooler

Pavillion)

656 State Street

(Dorothea Dix Ctr.)

159 Hogan Road (ELC)

### Dover Foxcroft

125 Summer Street

### Ellsworth

17 Eastward Lane

### Machias

13 Prescott Drive

### Calais

392 South Street

### Houlton

11 High Street

### Caribou

14 Access Highway

### Presque Isle

642 Main Street

### Fort Kent

137 Market Street

### Van Buren

4 Main Street



## Fit For Work

### Our Department supports staff health, safety and wellness!

**T**he Statewide Health and Safety Labor Management Committee is co-chaired by Becky Greene, DHHS Health and Safety Coordinator and Sharon Carroll, Office of Integrated Access and Support.

Our membership includes staff from various parts of DHHS both geographically and operationally. The statewide Committee is charged with reviewing workplace injuries/incidents, identifying and resolving occupational health issues, and addressing risks associated with staff safety.

An added component to our initiatives is employee health improvement. A number of offices/facilities are active in providing and supporting wellness activities for staff.

The statewide Committee meets monthly and each representative reports on local safety and health issues. In addition, local safety health and wellness committees meet regularly at various sites throughout our Department -- Farmington, Portland-Marginal Way, Portland-Lancaster Street, Key Plaza, Dorteia Dix Psychiatric Center, Riverview Psychiatric Center just to name a few active committees.

If you are interested in being part of a Safety and Health Committee, please contact Becky Greene at 287-9919.

### What's hiding in your family tree?

Medical history can uncover risks.

According to the Home News Tribune Online, David Johnson, physiology department chair at the University of New England's College of Osteopathic Medicine in Biddeford, says waiting for symptoms (of disease) to appear is "an ineffective way to practice medicine." By that time, he says, "the disease is winning." Click on the link below to view the US DHHS' Family History Initiative Website, which includes an online, interactive tool for Americans to use to track their own family histories.

[www.hhs.gov/familyhistory](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory)



### "Watch Your Step"

Winter bring many things to Maine including unsafe walking conditions. DHHS employees are a moving workforce with many staff required to leave your assigned work location during the course of your workday.

Please take the time to assess walking conditions when you leave your building or exit your car. Over the past two years, DHHS has reported 89 work related injuries related to slips and falls at the workplace.



## **Adult Protective Services -- DHHS and Penobscot Indian Nation Collaboration**

Approximately two years ago, Maine Adult Protective Services was contacted by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs as a result of the Penobscot Indian Nation's desire to establish their own Adult Protective Services system within their Department of Human Services. Representatives of Maine APS met with representatives of the Penobscot Indian Nation Department of Human Services and a collaborative effort was born to further the Penobscot Indian Nation's vision of having their own APS law and system.

A group of stakeholders that included representatives from the Penobscot Indian Nation Department of Human Services, the Elder Justice Project, Maine Adult Protective Services, Tribal attorneys, and Tribal Elders met bi-weekly for approximately eighteen months, culminating with the development of the Penobscot Indian Nation Adult Protective Services Law.

On February 15, 2006, the draft law was presented to the Penobscot Indian Nation Tribal Council and was approved. The next step is to present the law at a General Meeting to provide all Tribal members the opportunity to ask questions.

This effort has set the groundwork for what is anticipated to become a mutually beneficial partnership toward the reduction/elimination of adult and elder abuse for all Maine citizens.

## **Department of Health and Human Services Ranks High in Recent Report**

United Cerebral Palsy, one of the nation's leading organizations serving and advocating for the more than 54 million Americans with disabilities, released a report on March 7th detailing an analysis of how Medicaid is serving people with mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities.

In that report, Maine ranks second in the nation in service to individuals with mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities.

The author of the report – former Maine two-term member of the Maine House of Representatives Tarren Bragdon – charted each state's ranking and progresses in creating a "quality, meaningful and community-inclusive life for those Americans with mental retardation and developmental disabilities served by that state's Medicaid program."

In the report, Maine received an "A" in the categories of reaching those in need, providing self directed services and focusing on home and community based services. The State of Maine and the Department of Health and Human Services got an overall rank of "B." No state received an overall rank of "A."

This is not the first good grade the Maine Department of Human Services has received in the last several days. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, gave the Maine Department of Health and Human Services top grades when it comes to the care and treatment of the mentally ill.

The United Cerebral Palsy "A Case for Inclusion" report can be downloaded at:  
[http://www.ucp.org/uploads/full\\_inclusion\\_state\\_report.pdf](http://www.ucp.org/uploads/full_inclusion_state_report.pdf)

## Way To Go!

*Jerry McCarthy, Program Administrator, DHHS Office of Integrated Access & Support in Houlton*  
*Michael T. O'Connor, EBT Project Manager, DHHS Office of MaineCare Services*  
*Lee Richardson, DHHS Office of Integrated Access & Support, Caribou*  
*Deborah Roix, DHHS Office of Integrated Access & Support, Caribou*  
*with key assist from Patt Condon, Commissioner's Constituent Services,*

When they received a special request from a Legislative Majority Office for a constituent in need which required a complex series of communications involving all the staff recognized above, the staff involved executed a successful conclusion within 24 hours!

From Lee Richardson: "...this particular issue is resolved. Deb Roix worked with the client and the bank and EBT to get the client her money back...just a few minutes ago." And from Andrew Helman, Legislative Aide; Maine State House Majority Office: "Just spoke with (constituent). Great. Thanks so much. Sounds like Deb Roix did a fantastic job".

### **Rich McGovern – DHHS Office of MaineCare Services**

Recently, we heard the following from Shawn Yardley, Director, City of Bangor Health and Welfare:

"I thought I would pass along these positive comments. I certainly know first hand that you get far more complaints than complements as public servants. I am very appreciative of your help with this issue and hope that my staff's positive experience and their appreciation is conveyed to **Mr. McGovern** and his supervisor. Thanks again for your help and for your commitment to public service! Hope you have a great day!"

Attached to Shawn's note was a message to Shawn from Paula Cayia, reproduced with permission as follows:

"Hi Shawn Just a quick note to let you know how MaineCare billing is going! Today we finally sent out the first batch (claims) transmission, successfully! **Richard McGovern** has been instrumental in accomplishing this great feat. If you have the time, could you e-mail or give me the address, to his supervisor, so they know what a fine employee they have. **Richard** is very thorough and he has my deepest appreciation for his outstanding work. "

### **Ricker Hamilton and staff, DHHS Adult Protective Services in the Office of Elder Services**

Rachel Posner, DHHS Children's Team leader in the Office of Child and Family Services, Portland, had this to say about her experience working with Rick Hamilton and Adult Protective Services staff in his unit:

"In the past year, I have been at a number of meetings with **Ricker Hamilton & others from Adult Protective Services**, but I have never actually worked on a case with APS, and so had no direct experience with them. I met today with **Ricker and members of his staff**, along with representatives of one of our community agencies, to try to provide safety, stability, and appropriate short- and long-term services for a young woman. I can't tell you what a pleasure it was to see APS in action, and how much I admire the strength & depth of their commitment to the people they serve, & their flexibility in doing so. Despite various other aspects of this situation that are VERY frustrating ... I could not miss the opportunity to pass along my admiration for their work. In the absence of my knowing anything about adult services & its structure, I hope you will pass this along to the appropriate person(s) in Augusta."

*Thanks Rachel—and thanks Rick Hamilton, and staff of the Adult Protective Services Unit!*

## Name This Newsletter

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information that is helpful and pertinent to our work while at the same time serving as one of several communications tools. We hope that every issue will be a place to highlight employee accomplishments, bestow credit where credit is due, and bring us all a little closer together.

We've had a number of wonderful suggestions for the newsletter's contents, and we welcome you to continue submitting them to Peggie Dore in the Commissioner's office. One thing we don't have yet, however, is a great name for the newsletter. That's where we need your help.

For the next few weeks, we'd like you to submit your suggestions for a title for the newsletter to: [dhhsnewsletter@maine.gov](mailto:dhhsnewsletter@maine.gov). Your suggestions will be posted in an upcoming issue of our newsletter, and you, the DHHS staff statewide, will vote for your favorite title. The democratic process prevails—the title with the most votes wins.

Some of the other suggestions we've received for the newsletter so far include: a column, page, or pages, dedicated to news from Regional offices. We'd been giving that idea a lot of thought as well, and we hope you'll tell us what you want to know about what's going on all over the

state—because that's where we are—in more than 40 offices all around Maine. Maybe a list of where we are is a good place to start? Check out **page four for a list** of our central and regional office locations—you may be surprised at how big we are!

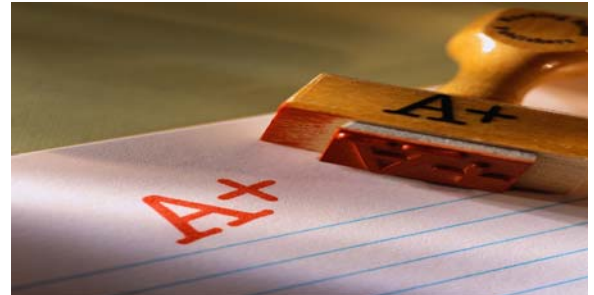
We hope you'll enjoy the second issue of our newsletter, and we continue to welcome your suggestions. You can send them to the newsletter e-mail above, or to [peggie.l.dore@maine.gov](mailto:peggie.l.dore@maine.gov).

### Letterhead Alert!

Acting Commissioner Harvey asks staff to **please** be sure to use the correct letterhead found at:

<http://inet.state.me.us/dhs/forms.htm>

Be sure to adjust the template with your office's correct information in both header and footer. Please contact your local tech support if you need assistance placing your unit name and contact information in the headers and footers. Thank you!



### QUIZ

Take this fun and quick quiz to find out how well you remember what you just read! (Answers on last page.)

1. Does DHHS have an office in Jay?
2. What year was Barbara Van Burgel made Deputy Director of her Bureau?
3. What is Lucky Hollander's title?
4. What Federal agency has oversight of Maine's food stamp program?

(Look for answers in the next issue)